



Kings Langley School

Unlocking Potential for Life

Children Looked After Policy

(Including the Addendum to the Children Looked After Policy: Children Known to a Social Worker)

Date Agreed – September 2025

Review Date – September 2026



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RATIONALE

This policy exists to provide a framework for supporting our stated aim of “ensuring the happiness of every individual in our community”, to promote a climate which enables all students to flourish, regardless of ability or special needs, and supports our desired outcomes of developing "strong character".

There has been concern since the mid-Seventies that the education of children in care has been neglected. Conversely, from about the same time, attention was also being drawn to the important part that successful schooling could play in helping children escape from social disadvantage. In 1995 a joint report by the Social Services Inspectorate and Ofsted stated that the care and education systems were failing to promote the educational achievement of children in care and drew attention to:

- poor exam success rates in comparison with the general population
- a high level of disruption and change in school placements
- lack of involvement in extracurricular activities
- inconsistent or no attention paid to homework
- underachievement in further and higher education

POLICY OBJECTIVE

To promote the educational achievement and welfare of Children Looked After (CLA) and Children Previously Looked After (PLA) on the roll of this school.

Name of the Designated Teacher for CLA and PLA

Graeme Searle

Name of the Designated School Governor for CLA and PLA

Emma Kell

This policy aims to outline clearly the procedures that should be followed when promoting the educational achievement and welfare of Children Looked After (CLA) and Children Previously Looked After (PLA) on the roll of this school, ensuring that they participate fully in high quality learning and make progress. It is essential that we promote the achievement of such vulnerable children, who may also face additional barriers because of their race, ethnicity, religion and beliefs, sexual orientation or because they are disabled.

This policy incorporates requirements set out in the statutory guidance on the duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of looked after children under section 52 of the Children Act 2004 and should be read in conjunction with The Role of the Designated Teacher, Guidance for Governors and the Hertfordshire Policy Statement on Children in Care.

At Kings Langley School we will ensure that children looked after (CLA) and children previously looked after (PLA) have access to excellent educational provision and are prioritised for additional support through school-based interventions to achieve as well as possible, in accordance with the *‘DfE Designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children Statutory guidance for local-authority-maintained schools carrying out duties for looked-after and previously looked-after children.’ (28th February 2018).*



We recognise that our school plays a vital role in providing a stable base for CLA/PLA and in promoting their academic, social and emotional development. We promote whole school staff training in their specific needs, so that all adults at this school are sensitive to the barriers to learning that CLA/PLA experience and feel able to support the children discretely and confidentially, as needs arise. We understand the need to work in a 'relationship-based' way so that children looked after and previously looked after feel valued and a part of our school community.

Our aim is to champion the needs of CLA/PLA to ensure they make rapid educational and social progress during their period in care in this school.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY STATEMENT

This policy is intended to be helpful for improvement in the education available for all learners but has a focus on children looked after who, statistically, experience disadvantage in education. The criteria are clear that the expectation is that all learners receive a high-quality, ambitious education; that providers are inclusive of all learners; and that all providers must be meeting their statutory duties, including those under the Equality Act 2010 and all protected characteristics therein.

An inclusive learning environment in which everybody is respected is conducive to a happy and healthy learning environment.

The Virtual School Attachment Aware and Trauma Informed Toolkit training will support a greater understanding of diversity and equality and is relevant to many children, not just Children Looked After and Children Previously Looked After.

PURPOSE

Under the Children Act 1989, a child is legally defined as 'looked after' by a local authority if he or she:

- gets accommodation from the local authority for a continuous period of more than 24 hours
- is subject to a care order (to put the child into the care of the local authority)
- is subject to a placement order (to put the child up for adoption)

For the purposes of this guidance:

- a child 'looked-after by a local authority' is one who is looked after within the meaning of section 22 of the Children Act 1989 or Part 6 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014
- a previously looked-after child is one who is no longer looked after in England and Wales because s/he is the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order which includes arrangements relating to with whom the child is to live, or when the child is to live with any person, or has been adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales



- a child is in 'state care' outside England and Wales if s/he is in the care of or accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation or any other organisation, the sole or main purpose of which, is to benefit society

(The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities: February 2018)

The Children Act (1989) introduced changes in terminology. The term 'in care' now refers solely to children who are subject to Care Orders. Children who are cared for on a voluntary basis are 'accommodated' by the local authority. Both these groups are said to be 'children looked after' (CLA) or children in care by the local authority. Accommodated children also include those in receipt of respite care, if it exceeds 20 days in one episode or over 120 days a year.

It is important not to confuse a young person's legal status with their living arrangements. For example, a child on a Care Order can be living with:

- foster carers
- in a children's home
- in a residential school
- with relatives, or
- even with parents – under supervision of 'Children, Schools and Families' (CSF)

Similarly, an 'accommodated' child can be living:

- in foster care
- in a children's home, or
- in a residential school

This policy incorporates requirements set out in the statutory guidance on the duty of local authorities to promote the educational achievement of children looked after under section 52 of the Children Act 2004, *The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children: Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities: February 2018* and the Hertfordshire Policy Statement on Children Looked After and should be read in conjunction with it. All schools have been issued with a copy of each document and may also refer to the Virtual School page on the Hertfordshire GRID for Learning.

The Children and Families Act 2014 amends section 22 of the Children Act 1989 to require every local authority in England to appoint an officer employed by the authority, or another authority, to make sure that its duty to promote the educational achievement of its looked after children is properly discharged. This officer is referred to as the Virtual School Head (VSH). In Hertfordshire, Marietta Harrow is the Virtual School Head.

It is also important to remember that while Parental Responsibility (PR) for the young person normally lies with the Local Authority and/or the parents, responsibility for day to day decisions is often delegated to the foster carers or staff at the residential home. It is therefore important to ascertain who holds PR and what if any authority has been delegated to carers as soon as possible. Each case will be different as to who will have responsibility and who will need to be kept informed.



GUIDELINES

Our Aims for CLA/PLA:

- to provide a safe and secure environment where educational progress and stability is always central to the planning and all adults understand the specific needs of CLA and PLA
- to narrow the gap between the attainment of CLA and PLA and their peers, ensuring accelerated and rapid progress
- that they benefit from school-based interventions, even if they do not meet the criteria for that intervention (*DfE Designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children statutory guidance for local-authority-maintained schools carrying out duties for looked-after and previously looked-after children. February 2018*) and to use the allocated Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) to ensure effective impact
- for all CLA to have at least termly Personal Education Planning (ePEP) meetings each academic year and for the joint planning and quality first teaching to have measurable impact on each child's learning on a daily basis (*DfE Designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children statutory guidance for local-authority-maintained schools carrying out duties for looked-after and previously looked-after children. 28th February 2018*)
- for all adults to provide sensitive, child-led support, adopting a relationship-based approach and with at least one key adult with whom the child or young person has a trusted relationship and who will act as an advocate for them and take a special interest in their progress in all school activities
- that school systems facilitate discrete support, that includes a strong relationship between school staff, carers and children looked after on roll
- CLA will be advantaged within school policies and procedures, with their needs explicitly considered and provided for (*DfE Designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children statutory guidance for local-authority-maintained schools carrying out duties for looked-after and previously looked-after children. 28th February 2018*)
- the Behaviour Policy maintains clear boundaries and expectations about behaviour but we understand that not all behaviour is a matter of choice. We will not enforce sanctions that shame and ostracise children looked after from their peers, school, community or family. In this school we seek to create an inclusive and positive school ethos for every pupil
- CLA and PLA and their families will feel part of the school community; they will be actively welcomed, involved and engaged into this school community (*DfE Designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children statutory guidance for local-authority-maintained schools carrying out duties for looked-after and previously looked-after children. 28th February 2018*)

EDUCATIONAL PLANNING FOR CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER

Personal Education Plans (ePEP) and CLA Self Evaluation Forms (CLASEF):

The school will ensure that every CLA on roll has a Personal Education Planning (ePEP) meeting that is reviewed termly, within the statutory care planning framework, and in collaboration with the social worker, carer and other relevant professionals. In any one school year there will be at least 3 PEP meetings for each CLA. The school will complete all sections of the CLASEF to share our plan for improvement and development in school for disadvantaged children and also to inform the



Hertfordshire Virtual School of the school's policy and practice, to account for the efficient and effective spend of the PP+ funding and to inform the school Governing Body as the annual report.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Headteacher and Governing Body are committed to promoting improved educational life chances for CLA and PLA. They will ensure that the Designated Teacher for Children Looked After has qualified teacher status, appropriate seniority in the leadership team and time and experience to fulfil this statutory role and have at least 2 days per year training to remain fully informed. They will monitor the role of the Designated Teacher to ensure that all CLA and PLA make accelerated and rapid progress and that the whole school staff receive appropriate training.

The Designated Teacher for Children Looked After and Children Previously Looked After is Graeme Searle. He is a qualified teacher, and will promote improved educational life chances for CLA and PLA through the following school systems:

- ensuring that the CLA or PLA has access to quality first teaching
- tracking the progress of CLA and PLA across the curriculum using data, teacher reports and book looks
- ensuring that the PP+ funding is used effectively and efficiently
- performing a coordinating role with school staff and outside agencies, where necessary
- ensuring effective communication with the school's assigned Education Adviser from the Virtual School
- developing expertise in the field of CLA, including attachment theory and trauma informed practice
- delivering the Virtual School training: 'An introduction to Attachment Aware and Trauma-Informed Practice' to the school
- providing and attending training and offering advice to the whole school staff
- promoting a school culture which is supportive, relationship-based and has high expectations for CLA and PLA
- regularly reporting to the Head and Governing Body on the attainment of CLA and PLA and school resources and staff training needs for working with this group prioritising CLA for school-based additional support, even when the young person does not meet the criteria (*DfE Designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children statutory guidance for local-authority-maintained schools carrying out duties for looked-after and previously looked-after children. 28th February 2018*)
- ensuring that CLA and PLA are not overlooked for positions of student responsibility within the school because of their care status
- completing the annual Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) of each CLA as requested, to inform their annual CLA health review

All staff will promote improved educational life chances for CLA and PLA by:

- attending relevant training, including the Virtual School toolkit training on 'Attachment Aware and Trauma-Informed Practice' (to be found on the Virtual School website: www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/virtualschool)
- providing accurate information and data when asked by the Designated Teacher
- referring to the Designated Teacher for advice
- playing their part in creating an attachment and trauma informed 'CLA-friendly' culture and securing rapid progress for CLA by ensuring that they benefit from any additional school-based support available



Attendance:

School attendance procedures reflect the specific needs of CLA and PLA to ensure good school attendance. Where there is a concern about attendance or punctuality the school will contact the carer, social worker and other professionals including the Virtual School, as an early intervention, as outlined in our attendance policy.

Admissions/Transitions:

School procedures to support CLA during admission and transition include:

- prioritising CLA and PLA at the point of admission
- the swift transfer of information between schools that may include school visits and at times of transition, teaching at the previous school
- early identification of a staff mentor and peer buddy
- additional support and planning for CLA and PLA at times of transition
- structured activities to 'say goodbye', in recognition of the impact of broken attachments and loss

Additional Educational Needs:

All staff will work creatively to secure accelerated and rapid progress for CLA and PLA with additional educational needs by:

- having high expectations
- ensuring that they are prioritised for additional school-based support, even if they do not meet the criteria (*in line with the DfE 'Designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children statutory guidance for local-authority-maintained schools carrying out duties for looked-after and previously looked-after children.'* (28th February 2018)
- ensuring that planning is coordinated, appropriate interventions identified and teaching to the plan is systematic; ensuring that any work undertaken by non-teaching staff has teacher over-sight (*in line with the Lamb Report, Dec '09*)
- ensuring that progress is regularly monitored and reviewed, against the targets set as agreed in the termly Virtual School visit, ePEP and Progress Report to Governors

Special Educational Needs & Disabilities:

All staff will work creatively to secure accelerated and rapid progress for CLA and PLA who have special educational needs & disabilities by:

- having high expectations of progress each academic year (*in line with the expectation set out in the ePEP and CLA-SEF*)
- ensuring that they are accessing school-based targeted support which is 'additional to and different from' the universal and additional needs provision (*in line with the SEND Code of Practice*)
- ensuring that all plans are coordinated, appropriate interventions identified, and teaching to the plan is systematic
- ensuring that progress is regularly monitored and reviewed, in line with the SEND Code of Practice
- ensuring that any work undertaken by non-teaching staff has teacher over-sight



- ensuring that with the school SENDCo the EHCP review is held in a timely way with all relevant professionals invited and their views obtained

Safeguarding:

School staff will be vigilant for any safeguarding issues which can impact particularly on CLA by:

Familiarising themselves with the '*School Policy Guidance for Children in Care*' and following the school's child protection policy and the '*DfE: Keeping Children Safe in Education*' (All staff) September 2025, if there are any safeguarding concerns.

Alternative Provision:

We will make every effort to ensure that any arrangements for provision alternative to daily attendance at school will be:

- a plan that will retain the CLA on the roll of the school or clarify in writing which educational establishment will be responsible for essential reporting and accountability for the PP+ funding
- an agreed part of the overall ePEP for the student
- full time (25 hours) or contribute to full time attendance and be of high quality
- meet the educational needs of the CLA or PLA
- will provide the opportunity to make rapid progress in the course of study provided by the setting
- will be monitored regularly and that ePEPs will include the school and the alternative provider

Suspension / Exclusion:

- we have reviewed the school behaviour policy (September 2025) in line with the statutory guidance published in February 2018 (*DfE 'Designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children statutory guidance for local-authority-maintained schools carrying out duties for looked-after and previously looked-after children.'* (28th February 2018).
- we will make every effort to avoid suspending / excluding a CLA, in recognition of the increased risk this poses in terms of them quickly disengaging from the school, due to their early experience of broken attachments and loss. Before acting, we will discuss the rationale for exclusion with the assigned Education Adviser from the Virtual School
- if there is no option other than suspension / exclusion, then we will make every attempt to reduce the number of days of the suspension / exclusion
- we will use the following methods to avoid suspending / excluding a child looked after or previously looked after; the use of other forms of sanction, restorative justice approaches and internal isolation
- school procedures are in place to reduce the risk of suspension / exclusion of CLA and PLA. CLA and PLA with special educational needs should have exclusion as a behaviour management action as a last possible resort (*Regulation 4(1) (c) of the Equalities Act 2010 which means that a head teacher could only lawfully exclude a child for a reason relating to their disability, even a disability that results in the child having a tendency to physical abuse, if reasonable adjustments have been made*)



Multi-Agency Working:

School staff will make every effort to develop positive professional relationships with colleagues from other agencies and facilitate their work. This will enable colleagues to successfully perform their roles and positively impact on the education and wider needs of CLA and PLA.

The Headteacher, Designated Teacher and Governing Body will ensure that all staff are briefed on the Statutory Guidance and practice outlined in this policy.

Date: September 2025

Review date: September 2026

The Hertfordshire Virtual School for Children Looked After

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ADDENDUM: CHILDREN KNOWN TO A SOCIAL WORKER

POLICY OBJECTIVE

To promote the educational outcomes of the cohort of children with a social worker (CWSW) and those who have been previously known to a social worker (CKSW) who are aged from 0 up to 18, so that these children make educational progress.

At Kings Langley School we will ensure that children with a social worker (CWSW) and those who have previously had a social worker (CKSW) have access to excellent educational provision that supports engagement and attendance so that these children are kept safe from harm and are able to reach their potential, in accordance with the *DfE's 'Promoting the education of children with a social worker' Virtual School Head role extension, June 2021*.

We recognise that our school plays a vital role in maintaining high aspiration for CWSW and CKSW and that providing a stable base for these children and promoting their academic, social and emotional development will level up their outcomes and narrow the attainment gap. To this end, we promote whole school staff training in their specific needs, so that all adults at this school are sensitive to the barriers to learning that CWSW and CKSW experience and feel able to support the children discretely and confidentially, as needs arise. We understand the need to work in a 'relationship-based' way so that these children and their families are valued as part of our school community.

Our aim is to champion the educational attendance, attainment and progress of CWSW and CKSW to ensure they make rapid educational and social progress whilst on roll at this school.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY STATEMENT

This policy is intended to be helpful for improvement in the education available for all learners but has a focus on CWSW and CKSW who, statistically, experience disadvantage in education (see p 8-9 of guidance). The criteria are clear that the expectation is that all learners receive a high-quality, ambitious education; that providers are inclusive of all learners; and that all providers must be meeting their statutory duties, including those under the Equality Act 2010 and all protected characteristics therein.

The Virtual School Attachment Aware and Trauma Informed Toolkit training will support a greater understanding of diversity and equality and is relevant to many children.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Headteacher and Governing Body are committed to promoting improved educational life chances for CWSW and CKSW through partnership work with other agencies, so that the system around these children and families prioritises education.

All staff will promote improved educational life chances for CWSW and CKSW:

- attending relevant training, including the Virtual School toolkit training on 'Attachment Aware and Trauma-Informed Practice' (to be found on the Virtual School website: www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/virtualschool)
- playing their part in creating a school and classroom ethos so that individual needs are understood and supported



Attendance:

School attendance procedures will support regular and good attendance. Where there is a concern about attendance or punctuality the school will contact the parent, social worker and other professionals, as an early intervention, as outlined in our attendance policy.

Admissions/Transitions:

- the swift transfer of information between schools that may include school visits and at times of transition, teaching at the previous school
- early identification of needs and support such as a staff mentor
- structured activities to secure good attachment in school with both staff and peers

Additional Educational Needs:

- having high expectations
- ensuring that planning is coordinated, appropriate interventions identified and teaching to the plan is systematic; ensuring that any work undertaken by non-teaching staff has teacher oversight (*in line with the Lamb Report, Dec '09*)
- ensuring that progress is regularly monitored and reviewed

Special Educational Needs & Disabilities:

- ensuring that CWSW and CKSW are accessing school-based targeted support which is 'additional to and different from' the universal and additional needs provision (*in line with the SEND Code of Practice*)
- ensuring that all plans are coordinated, appropriate interventions identified, and teaching to the plan is systematic
- ensuring that progress is regularly monitored and reviewed, in line with the SEND Code of Practice
- ensuring that any work undertaken by non-teaching staff has teacher oversight
- that with the school SENDCo the EHCP review is held in a timely way with all relevant professionals invited and their views obtained

Safeguarding:

School policies around safeguarding are understood and that school is seen as a protective factor for CWSW and CKSW, where school attendance can help keep a child safe from harm either in the home or from non-familial abuse.

Alternative Provision:

- any variation to a full-time provision on site is agreed with parents and social care and is time limited
- be full-time (25 hours) or contribute to full-time attendance and be of high quality
- meet the educational needs of the child
- will provide the opportunity to make rapid progress in the course of study provided by the setting



Exclusion:

We have reviewed the school behaviour policy (September 2025) in line with the new duty guidance published in June 2021 (*Promoting the education of children with a social worker, Virtual School Head role extension, June 2021*):

- we will make every effort to avoid suspension / exclusion, in recognition of the increased risk this poses in terms of CWSW and CKSW quickly disengaging from the school
- if there is no option other than suspension / exclusion, then we will make every attempt to reduce the number of days of the suspension / exclusion
- we will use the following methods to avoid suspending / excluding a child (*to be completed by the school*)
- school procedures are in place to reduce the risk of suspension / exclusion of a child with special educational needs. Suspension / exclusion as a behaviour management action will be a last possible resort (*Regulation 4(1)(c) of the Equalities Act 2010 which means that a head teacher could only lawfully exclude a child for a reason relating to their disability, even a disability that results in the child having a tendency to physical abuse, if reasonable adjustments have been made*)

Multi-Agency Working:

- School staff will make every effort to develop positive professional relationships with colleagues from other agencies and facilitate their work. This will enable colleagues to successfully perform their roles and positively impact on the education outcomes of CWSW and CKSW, supporting progress and enabling these children to reach their potential.

The Headteacher and Governing Body will ensure that all staff are briefed on the guidance and practice outlined in this policy addendum.

Date: September 2025

Review date: September 2026

The Hertfordshire Virtual School for Children Looked After

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